AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1-63. (Cancelled)

64. (Previously Presented) A device for improving heart valve function, the device comprising:

a first anchoring member;

a second anchoring member;

a connection member connecting the first and second anchoring members, the connection member being further configured to be positioned adjacent an external surface of a heart wall; and

a structure configured to be positioned in contact with an external surface of the heart wall such that the structure exerts an inward force against the heart wall proximate a valve,

wherein the inward force is sufficient to alter valve function.

65. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 64, wherein the structure protrudes from the connection member.

66. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 64, wherein the structure is configured to exert an inward force sufficient to draw leaflets of the valve together.

67. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 64, wherein the anchoring members are configured to secure the device to the heart.

68. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 64, wherein the connection member is configured to be selectively adjustable so as to alter relative positions between at least one of the first and second anchoring members and the structure.

69. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 68, wherein the connection member is configured to be selectively lockable relative to the first anchoring member, second anchoring member, and structure.

70. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 69, further comprising at least one pin associated with the first anchoring member, second anchoring member, and structure and configured to penetrate the connection member so as to selectively lock the connection member to the first anchoring member, second anchoring member, and structure.

71-72. (Cancelled)

73. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 64, further comprising an elongate member configured to extend transverse a heart chamber and be secured to the heart via the first and second anchoring members.

74. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 64, wherein the valve is a mitral valve.

75. (Previously Presented) A method for improving heart valve function, the method comprising:

providing a device comprising a first anchoring member, a second anchoring member, a connection member connecting the first and second anchoring members, and a structure between the first and second anchoring members;

positioning the connection member adjacent an external surface of a heart wall; and

positioning the structure in contact with an external surface of the heart wall such that the structure exerts an inward force against the heart wall proximate a valve, wherein the inward force is sufficient to alter valve function.

76. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 75, wherein the inward force is sufficient to draw leaflets of the valve together.

77. (Cancelled)

78. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 75, wherein the valve is a mitral valve.

79. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 75, further comprising adjusting a position of the device while observing the valve function.

80. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 75, wherein the inward force is exerted on an annulus of the valve.

81. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 75, wherein the inward force is sufficient to reposition papillary muscles of the valve.

82. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 75, further comprising positioning the device outside the epicardium of the heart.

83. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 82, further comprising attaching the device to the epicardium.

84. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 75, wherein the inward force is exerted throughout the cardiac cycle.

85. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 75, further comprising selectively adjusting the connection member so as to alter relative positions between at least one of the first and second anchoring members and the structure.

86. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 85, further comprising selectively locking the connection member to the at least one first anchoring member, second anchoring member, and structure.

87. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 86, wherein at least one pin is associated with the at least one first anchoring member, second anchoring member, and structure and the method further comprises penetrating the connection member with the pin so as to selectively lock the connection member to the at least one first anchoring member, second anchoring member, and structure.

88. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 75, wherein providing the device further comprises providing an elongate member configured to extend transverse a heart chamber and be secured to the heart via the first and second anchoring members.

89. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 88, further comprising positioning the first and second anchoring members adjacent first and second heart wall portions substantially opposite each other and drawing the first and second heart wall portions toward each other.

90. (Currently Amended) A device for improving heart valve function, the device comprising:

a first anchoring member configured to be secured to heart tissue;

a second anchoring member configured to be secured to heart tissue; and

a connection member connecting the first anchoring member and the second anchoring member,

wherein the connection member is configured to be selectively adjustable so as to alter a tension of the connection member between the first anchoring member and the second anchoring member, and

wherein a structure attached to the connection member is configured to be positioned exterior to a heart chamber proximate a valve such that the device exerts an inward force on the heart wall sufficient to alter the valve function.

91. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 90, wherein the connection member is flexible.

92-93. (Cancelled)

94. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 90, wherein the connection member is configured to be adjustably connected to at least one of the first and second anchoring members.

95. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 94, wherein the connection member is configured to be selectively lockable relative to at least one of the first and second anchoring members.

96. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 95, further comprising a pin configured to selectively penetrate the connection member so as to selectively lock the connection member to at least one of the first and second anchoring members.

97. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 94, wherein the connection member is configured to be adjustably connected to the first anchoring member and to the second anchoring member.

98. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 90, wherein the first anchoring member and the second anchoring member are configured to be secured to an epicardial layer of the heart.

99. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 90, wherein the structure is configured to be positioned between the first anchoring member and the second anchoring member.

100. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 90, further comprising an elongate member configured to extend transverse the heart chamber and be secured to the heart via the first and second anchoring members.

101. (Previously Presented) A method for improving heart valve function, the method comprising:

providing a device comprising a first anchoring member configured to be secured to heart tissue, a second anchoring member configured to be secured to heart tissue, and a connection member connecting the first anchoring member and the second anchoring member; and

positioning at least a portion of the connection member exterior to a heart chamber proximate a valve such that the device exerts an inward force on the heart

sufficient to alter the valve function, wherein a structure is attached to the portion of the connection member,

wherein the connection member is configured to be selectively adjustable so as to alter a tension of the interconnecting member between the first anchoring member and the second anchoring member.

102. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 101, wherein the inward force is sufficient to draw leaflets of the valve together.

103. (Cancelled)

104. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 101, wherein the valve is a mitral valve.

105. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 101, wherein the inward force is exerted on an annulus of the valve.

106. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 101, wherein the inward force is sufficient to reposition papillary muscles of the valve.

107. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 101, further comprising positioning the device outside the epicardium of the heart.

108. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 101, further comprising selectively adjusting the tension of the connection member.

109. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 101, further comprising adjusting a relative position of the first and second anchoring members so as to adjust the tension in the connection member.

110. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 109, further comprising selectively locking the connection member to at least one of the first anchoring member and the second anchoring after adjusting the relative position.

111. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 110, wherein the selectively locking includes penetrating the connection member with a pin.

112. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 101, further comprising securing the first anchoring member and the second anchoring member to an epicardial layer of the heart.

113. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 101, wherein providing the device further comprises providing an elongate member configured to extend transverse the heart chamber and secured to the heart via the first and second anchoring members.

114. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 101, further comprising exerting the inward force on the heart wall throughout a cardiac cycle.

115. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 101, wherein the structure is disposed between the first anchoring member and the second anchoring member.